

## Local Food Promotion Program (LFPP) Final Performance Report

The final performance report summarizes the outcome of your LFPP award objectives. As stated in the LFPP Terms and Conditions, you will not be eligible for future LFPP or Farmers Market Promotion Program grant funding unless all close-out procedures are completed, including satisfactory submission of this final performance report.

This final report will be made available to the public once it is approved by LFPP staff. Write the report in a way that promotes your project's accomplishments, as this document will serve as not only a learning tool, but a promotional tool to support local and regional food programs. Particularly, recipients are expected to provide both qualitative and quantitative results to convey the activities and accomplishments of the work.

The report is limited to 10 pages and is due **within 90 days** of the project's performance period end date, or sooner if the project is complete. Provide answers to each question, or answer "not applicable" where necessary. It is recommended that you email or fax your completed performance report to your assigned grant specialist to avoid delays:

LFPP Phone: 202-720-2731; Email: [USDALFPPQuestions@ams.usda.gov](mailto:USDALFPPQuestions@ams.usda.gov); Fax: 202-720-0300

Should you need to mail your documents via hard copy, contact LFPP staff to obtain mailing instructions.

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>Report Date Range:</b><br>(e.g. September 30, 20XX-September 29, 20XX) | October 1, 2014 – January 31, 2017                                   |
| <b>Authorized Representative Name:</b>                                    | Robin Chanin   |
| <b>Authorized Representative Phone:</b>                                   | 404-254-6175 x703  |
| <b>Authorized Representative Email:</b>                                   | <a href="mailto:robin@globalgrowers.org">robin@globalgrowers.org</a> |
| <b>Recipient Organization Name:</b>                                       | Global Growers Network, Inc.   |
| <b>Project Title as Stated on Grant Agreement:</b>                        | Global Growers Food Hub Expansion Project                            |
| <b>Grant Agreement Number:</b><br>(e.g. 14-LFPPX-XX-XXXX)                 | 14-LFPPX-GA-0044   |
| <b>Year Grant was Awarded:</b>  | 2014   |
| <b>Project City/State:</b>  | Atlanta, GA  |
| <b>Total Awarded Budget:</b>  | 88,390   |

LFPP staff may contact you to follow up for long-term success stories. Who may we contact?

☒ Same Authorized Representative listed above (check if applicable).

☐ Different individual: Name: \_\_\_\_\_; Email: \_\_\_\_\_; Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

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1. State the goals/objectives of your project as outlined in the grant narrative and/or approved by LFPP staff. If the goals/objectives from the narrative have changed from the grant narrative, please highlight those changes (e.g. “new objective”, “new contact”, “new consultant”, etc.). You may add additional goals/objectives if necessary. For each item below, qualitatively discuss the progress made and indicate the impact on the community, if any.

**Goal/Objective 1: Completion of a Memo of Understanding and operations agreement between Global Growers Food Hub Expansion Project and The Common Market Georgia:**

**Progress Made:** With the in-kind support of Emory University’s Turner Environmental Law Clinic, Global Growers and Emory University developed an MOU and Operations agreement. This completed MOU will ensure effective completion of all objectives in this grant proposal through a clearly defined collaborative structure, as well as to establish a foundation for continued success connecting Georgia’s small farmers with wholesale markets.

**Impact on Community:** By leveraging the strengths of and coordinating services provided by Global Growers (GG) and The Common Market Georgia (CMGA), farmers in Georgia have increased access to technical assistance and to new markets to sell fruits and vegetables. The MOU positions GG as the primary training partner for CMGA, and it clarifies the market focus of each partner. GG will continue to aggregate and distribute produce to direct market (e.g., CSA) and smaller-scale wholesale customers (e.g., restaurants, small retail, local meal kit companies). CMGA will aggregate and distribute produce to institutional wholesale customers (e.g., schools, hospitals, universities). The MOU is intended to give clarity to producers and buyers on the respective roles of GG and CMGA, and it promotes collaboration and collective impact.

**Goal/Objective 2: Expand our food hub’s farmer network**

**Progress Made:** Through a statewide outreach effort, we significantly expanded our farmer network, exceeding the original goals of the project (see table below). The LFPP funds supported hiring a Farmer Outreach position to conduct initial phone assessments, with follow up farm visits for on-site farmer assessments. As a result, we added 15 new produce vendors, 6 dairy & egg vendors, 4 value-added vendors, and 1 grain vendor.

Additionally, we leveraged this work and the partnership with The Common Market Georgia to secure additional funding to launch a Wholesale Readiness program to continue to expand the farmer network, as well as launching the Georgia Small Farms Food Safety Campaign to increase the number of GAP certified farms in Georgia. We are continuing efforts to secure additional land to expand co-farming and incubator farming operations, primarily for the refugee, immigrant and other farmers of color that we serve, in order to strengthen the supply chain by increasing the amount of land in production for local distribution and increasing the number of farmers growing food for local distribution. The land strategies are being pursued in partnership with The Conservation Fund.

| <b><i>Activities/Outcomes</i></b>                 | <b><i>Completed Cumulatively</i></b> | <b><i>Completion Goal</i></b> |
|---|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| On-site farmer assessments                        | <b>33</b>                            | 20                            |
| New farmers entering growing agreements           | <b>10</b>                            | 10                            |
| Increase in acreage covered by growing agreements | <b>100</b>                           | 12                            |

**Impact on Community:** With a newly expanded farmer network, 2016 purchases from farmers increased significantly (277%), primarily with sales to new markets that had not previously been accessed by network farmers. As a result, new customers had direct and easy access to local fruits and vegetables. With support from LFPP, we were able to focus on building new farmer relationships that is strengthening the supply chain for local food.

| <i>Year</i> | <i>Total Sales</i> | <i>% increase</i> |
|-------------|--------------------|-------------------|
| 2014        | \$72,253           | baseline          |
| 2015        | \$104,636          | 31%               |
| 2016        | \$395,000          | 277%              |

**Goal/Objective 3: Expand the hub's buyer network, including wholesale contracts**

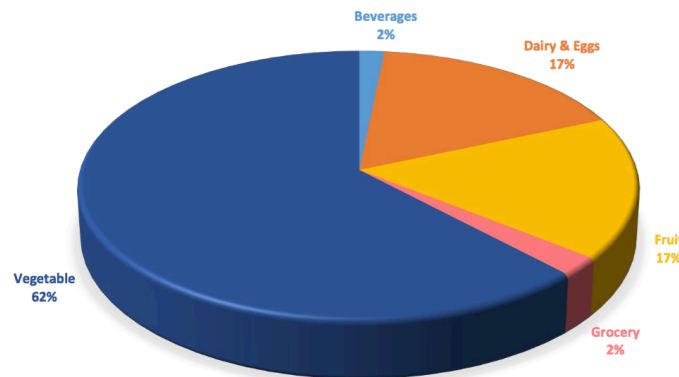
**Progress Made:** In collaboration with The Common Market Georgia, we have achieved the following:

| <i>Activities/Outcomes</i>             | <i>Completed Cumulatively</i>                           | <i>Completion Goal</i> |
|--|---|------------------------|
| 10 buyer/distributor assessments       | 33  | 10                     |
| Producer Sales                         | \$252,000 - Common Market<br>\$143,000 - Global Growers | None                   |
| Wholesale buyer agreements completed** | 0   | 0                      |

\*\* We have discovered during this research that almost no institutions are prepared to complete buyer agreements and commit to purchases definitively in advance. We have, however, worked with a number of these institutions to plan for 2017 orders, with verbal purchasing commitments.

**Impact on Community:** As noted above, we have achieved increased sales to new and existing buyers for a total of \$395,000 for the 2016 season. The sales breakdown includes 79% fruits and vegetables. By expanding the buyer network, we were able to work with individual farmers to support an expansion in their production, advise on market-driven crop selection, and improve postharvest systems.

## GEORGIA 2016



### **Goal/Objective 4 (original): Plan and implement expanded physical and logistics infrastructure for supporting food hub**

**Progress Made:** Global Growers established a collaborative relationship with The Common Market Georgia to meet local demand for aggregation and distribution services, beyond what would be possible to achieve alone. Together, we are developing the shared infrastructure needed by securing a warehouse facility and implementing a strategy of on-farm mini hubs for established farmer groups and geographic clusters. After leasing cold storage space in 2015, CMGA purchased a 60,000 sq ft warehouse in Atlanta in 2016. Global Growers expanded and upgraded its on-site post-harvest handling operations, ensuring compliance with GAP standards in anticipation of applying for GAP certification. Global Growers increased its on-farm cold storage capacity by 172%, based on square feet of cold storage. Global Growers also invested in the expansion of West Georgia Farmers' Cooperative mini hub to increase their cold storage capacity with the addition of a mobile.

**Impact on Community:** The produce industry is a logistics play, and successful distribution relies on logistics systems and infrastructure. With support from LFPP, we are now significantly more competitive in the marketplace, which brings direct benefits to our farmer network through increased sales and through infrastructure that is now available to them. In certain cases, we've also been able to use this expanded infrastructure for suppliers to store products that we do not take ownership of. Global Growers and the West Georgia Cooperative have shared their on-farm mini-hubs with others farmers and farmer groups, as a model of efficient and cost-effective logistics design. Global Growers now hosts food safety and postharvest handling workshops at our training farm location, using the infrastructure and systems that were implemented with LFPP support.

### **2. Quantify the overall impact of the project on the intended beneficiaries, if applicable, from the baseline date (the start of the award performance period, September 30, 20\_\_). Include further explanation if necessary.**

- i. Number of direct jobs created: .5 FTE; two contract positions; 3 new FTE positions at The Common Market Georgia, based on our collaborative plans to expand the hub activities.
- ii. Number of jobs retained: 4
- iii. Number of indirect jobs created: 4

- iv. Number of markets expanded: 2
- v. Number of new markets established: 1
- vi. Market sales increased by \$322,747 and increased by 277%.
- vii. Number of farmers/producers that have benefited from the project: 41

**3. Did you expand your customer base by reaching new populations such as new ethnic groups, additional low income/low access populations, new businesses, etc.? If so, how?**

In 2016, Global Growers became a partner of Wholesome Wave Georgia to allow farmers to accept and double the value of EBT/SNAP benefits through direct market sales (CSA and farmers markets). Our CSA program was the leader in the state of Georgia for EBT/SNAP members, though this number was still disappointingly low at 7 members (out of 150 total members). Working with The Common Market Georgia, we determined that the pilot project to stock fresh produce coolers was not feasible. However, The Common Market did launch a Community Food Access Program for direct service groups that are supply fresh produce to low-income communities – essentially providing produce at cost. And, The Common Market also partnered with Wholesome Wave Georgia to fulfill a Veggie RX program for low income patients at Grady Hospital that are grappling with diet related illnesses. Common Market was also successful in starting up delivery to schools in Atlanta.

**4. Discuss your community partnerships.**

**Who are your community partners?**

Global Growers engaged a wide variety of community partners for this project. Most notably, our partnership with the Common Market Georgia has ultimately had the largest bearing on the outcomes of this project, bringing considerable resources and expertise for aggregation and distribution for farmers in Georgia. In addition, Global Growers has worked with the following key partners for our food hub expansion:

- Georgia Fruit & Vegetable Growers Association
- Wholesome Wave Georgia
- Georgia Organics
- Southeastern African American Farmers Organic Network (SAAFON)
- West Georgia Farmers Cooperative
- Southwest Georgia Project
- USDA LINC
- 11<sup>th</sup> Hour Project
- Atlanta Community Food Bank
- City of Atlanta Office of Sustainability
- DeKalb County Department of Public Health
- Fort Valley State University
- RSF Social Finance
- Northeast Georgia Food Hub
- Food Well Alliance
- The Conservation Fund

**How have they contributed to the results you've already achieved? How will they contribute to future results?**

Key partners have contributed directly to the outcomes of this grant, as well as facilitated access to knowledge, networks, or capital that have supported our work. Several partners supported statewide farmer outreach to expand our farmer network. This helped support our ability to reach new farmers and work with them to determine if wholesale sales were an appropriate path. We were also able to refer farmers to external resources to support their business development. Others helped to make introductions to new institutional buyers, including schools, hospitals, universities, and municipal facilities. All provided key input, advice, and thought leadership to support our process of strengthening the supply chain for local food.

This grant helped us to strengthen existing partnerships and to build new ones. Beyond the grant period, we will continue to coordinate, cooperate, and collaborate with partners in order to continue expanding our farmer network, access new buyers/customers, and improve our logistics and services. We are continuing to expand our farmer services to provide more support for wholesale readiness and food safety in order to strengthen the supply chain. We are also continuing to expand infrastructure and logistics that will support aggregation and distribution. For example, CMGA will soon be able to begin storing processed and frozen foods, as well as meat products, thanks to a partnership with the Northeast Georgia Food Hub.

**Did you use contractors to conduct the work? If so, how did their work contribute to the results of the LFPP project?**

Yes, the individuals leading the expansion project and liaising with farmers have been primarily contractors. They have been instrumental in achieving the work described herein. The main contractor, Susan Pavlin, also contributed a significant amount of in-kind work to the project. We also conducted farmer outreach on a contractual basis and worked with web and graphic design contractors for the branding component. By employing contractors to conduct a significant amount of the expansion activities, this allowed Global Growers staff to continue to focus on existing programs and services, while the expansion work moved ahead.

**5. Have you publicized any results yet?\***

i. If yes, how did you publicize the results?

We promoted the market expansion through Global Growers media channels. We developed new online and print materials for Farm Share (CSA) sales and for restaurant and wholesale sales.

ii. To whom did you publicize the results?

We publicized organizational updates to our existing constituent and to organizational partners. We send out an e-newsletter to about 2,000 individuals, and we have several thousand social media followers.

iii. How many stakeholders (i.e. people, entities) did you reach?

We reached 15-20 community partners and approximately 3000 area individuals through email and social media.

\*Send any publicity information (brochures, announcements, newsletters, etc.) electronically along with this report. Non-electronic promotional items should be digitally photographed and emailed with this report (do not send the actual item).

The following links include publicity information:

- Concept Paper for a National Network of Local Food Distributors:  
<http://www.thecommonmarket.org/assets/uploads/reports/Atlanta-Concept-Paper-Web-Version-150714.pdf>

- “Common Market” Offers Innovative Solutions to Fresh Food Distribution Problems:  
<https://foodtank.com/news/2015/10/common-market-offering-innovative-solutions-to-fresh-food-distribution-prob/>
- The Common Market earns Safe Quality Food Certification:  
<https://www.universitybusiness.com/news/common-market-earns-safe-quality-food-certification>
- The Common Market Newsletter - Winter 2017:  
[https://www.dropbox.com/s/h0zk74az6xurt5c/CM\\_Newsletter-Winter2017\\_screen.pdf?dl=0](https://www.dropbox.com/s/h0zk74az6xurt5c/CM_Newsletter-Winter2017_screen.pdf?dl=0)
- CMGA Availability List: <https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1QJqPktNAjN5bjWt3k59NT3k-L3R7sgsyWPta3X12ok/edit?usp=sharing>
- Restaurant Farm Share promo:  
[https://drive.google.com/a/globalgrowers.org/file/d/0B\\_g0vN3ZzdojMjNHWENNeGZ5Yjk4OWp\\_nWE50Q0xpZ2JTc1Nv/view?usp=drive\\_web](https://drive.google.com/a/globalgrowers.org/file/d/0B_g0vN3ZzdojMjNHWENNeGZ5Yjk4OWp_nWE50Q0xpZ2JTc1Nv/view?usp=drive_web)
- Farm Share promo:  
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B13RRHmzl0YjVUQ4LWk4a0lNeUU/view?usp=sharing>
- Farmer profiles: <https://drive.google.com/open?id=0B13RRHmzl0YjLWk3dTJISU5GX00>

**6. Have you collected any feedback from your community and additional stakeholders about your work? Yes**

- i. If so, how did you collect the information?  
Customer surveys. Customer and farmer interviews.
- ii. What feedback was relayed (specific comments)?  
Farmer Feedback:
  - West Georgia Farmers Coop is thrilled to have increased weekly sales from about 5-10 cases weekly to nearly 400 cases weekly, which has been instrumental for both WGFC growth and the food hub expansion.
  - Piney Woods Farms said that the aggregation operations offered an opportunity to develop wholesale sales operations as the foundation of sales for their newly established farm, which invested in 19 high tunnels.
  - Global Growers farmers are pleased to have less reliance on direct marketing.
  - New Communities Farm (Resora) reports that the food hub made entry into the Atlanta marketplace possible, since their rural location makes marketing difficult.
  - Aluma Farms transitioned from direct microgreen sales to wholesale microgreen sales, and report that the assistance with distribution has given them the time to increase production and their overall viability.
 Customer Feedback:
  - Bon Appetit (Emory University) reports that they appreciate the consistency, quality, and volume of the supply.
  - Morrison’s Healthcare reports being able to convert from instant grits to locally-sourced grits and instituting a “vegetable of the month” feature, as well as committing to implement a weekly box distribution program at their corporate HQ in 2017.
  - A private school chef is enthusiastic about incorporating presentations about the farmers into F2S curriculum – even interested in sourcing a whole hog to butcher with his high school students!

- City Schools of Decatur is excited to continue its “vegetable of the month” program in order to increase local sourcing and is now advocating for new and processed products to be added to availability.
- Processed (fresh cut and frozen) vegetables are in high demand among customers.
- Georgia Tech’s executive chef identified Global Growers products as ideal for their catering arm since they offer a unique dining experience.

**7. Budget Summary:**

- i. As part of the LFPP closeout procedures, you are required to submit the SF-425 (Final Federal Financial Report). Check here if you have completed the SF-425 and are submitting it with this report: ☒
- ii. Did the project generate any income?
  - a. If yes, how much was generated and how was it used to further the objectives of the award?

The project generated income through produce sales as described in previous sections.

**8. Lessons Learned:** Summarize any lessons learned. Draw from positive experiences (e.g. good ideas that improved project efficiency or saved money) and negative experiences (e.g. what did not go well and what needs to be changed). If goals or outcome measures were not achieved, identify and share the lessons learned to help others expedite problem-solving. Describe any lessons learned in the administration of the project that might be helpful for others who would want to implement a similar project:

- Obtaining vendor status with food service companies is challenging until you reach scale, and it’s difficult to reach scale without vendor status. Without a network approach to pressuring food service companies to provide access, it is difficult to achieve. We overcame this through the partnership with Common Market, and their pre-existing operations based in the mid-Atlantic in order to vouch for Georgia-based distribution. For example, after nearly one year of limited p-card purchasing by Morrison’s Healthcare, CMGA just received its vendor number in early 2017.
- It took nearly a year to penetrate Bon Appetit at Emory University in order to put a contact together. During that year, we focused on relationship-building and improving the consistency of product availability in order to demonstrate the value of working with their hub. As a start-up operation, we went out of our way to demonstrate operational efficiency and quality customer service.
- There are multiple challenges on the farm-producer side to be wholesale ready. As described above, we are increasing resources available to support farmer wholesale readiness.
- Logistical challenges cannot be understated in a geographic area where there is a lack of infrastructure to support wholesale aggregation. Logistics continued to be a challenge.

**9. Future Work:**

- i. How will you continue the work of this project beyond the performance period? In other words, how will you parlay the results of your project’s work to benefit future community goals and initiatives? Include information about community impact and outreach, anticipated increases in markets and/or sales, estimated number of jobs retained/created, and any other information you’d like to share about the future of your project.



- ii. Do you have any recommendations for future activities and, if applicable, an outline of next steps or additional research that might advance the project goals?

GG and CMGA project an increase in sales between 50-200% in 2017 by increasing the customer base and expanding the farmer network. Expansion of the farmer network is focused on working with farmer groups, clusters, and cooperatives. Global Growers is creating 1 new FTE position and 2 PT positions in 2017 for related activities. CMGA is hiring 3 new FTE positions, including one FTE position that will focus on securing early childcare customers. Expansion into additional schools is a key part of new strategy, along with expanding the relationship with Morrison's Healthcare. Global Growers will continue the Restaurant Farm Share for smaller, wholesale customers. CMGA will work with Wholesome Wave Georgia to expand the Veggie Rx program to increase food access and promote healthy eating.

Organizational strategic goals for the next 3 years include a) increasing the amount of land in sustainable agricultural production, b) connecting farmers to productive land opportunities, c) increasing the number of commercial farmers that are successful in their sales, and d) to have 75% of beginning farmers report they are still farming after 3 years.

Recommendation for future activities is to continue and increase collaboration on studies and pilots for supply chain development. For example, Schol Food Focus is working to develop and test supply chain resources for procurement. We also need additional analysis to encourage investment in supply chain and logistics infrastructure that will benefit small-to-mid scale farms.